



**For Immediate Release**

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### **Carbon Monoxide, the Silent Killer**

Carbon Monoxide is an odorless, tasteless, invisible, poison gas. It is produced when carbon-containing materials, like wood, coal, oil, and natural gas, burn incompletely. This occurs when a fire has a low oxygen supply.

A common problem in Alaska is the use of portable electric generators and heating units in unventilated structures. High levels of Carbon Monoxide are produced by small gas and diesel engines when the exhaust is not vented outside of the structure. An unventilated heating unit will also fill the structure with dangerous Carbon Monoxide gas.

Early signs of Carbon Monoxide exposure are headache, sleepiness, nausea, and dizziness. Unfortunately these symptoms are identical to flu symptoms. Carbon Monoxide exposure is accumulative and will get worse the longer you stay in the contaminated atmosphere. It is important to get to fresh air and have your home checked for Carbon Monoxide.

Common sources of Carbon Monoxide are:

- Fuel-fired furnaces
- Gas water heaters, stoves, and dryers.
- Gas-powered generators.
- Fireplaces, woodstoves, and charcoal grills.
- Lawnmowers and snowblowers.
- Cars, trucks, ATV's, snowmobiles, and motorcycles

These machines can produce Carbon Monoxide if they do not have enough fresh air flowing around them. If Carbon Monoxide builds up near you and your family, you can be poisoned, injured, even killed.

The first line of defense against Carbon Monoxide poisoning is to ensure that your home and heating equipment have plenty of fresh air ventilation. Secondly, have your gas, oil, or wood burning appliances checked and serviced regularly by a professional. It is also important to install at least one Carbon Monoxide alarm near the bedrooms in the home. It is recommended to have at least one Carbon Monoxide alarm on every floor.

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